2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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And Wikar, as far back as 1778, described what almost seems
have been a form of wife exchange among the Little Namaqua
ibes. A married man, he says, will come at night into the hut of
nother, and lie down next to the latter's wife; whereupon the
usband gets up to make room for him, and goes to sleep in another
rt of the hut. The following night this process is reversed, but,
Wikar delightfully adds, if the wife of the man who first initiated
is ugly, the affair is soon ended ("maar is de vrouw van diegeene
e 't spel eerst begonnen heeft leelijk, dan wil 't tog niet braaf lukken
et deeze handel")! This form of intercourse is naturally of quite
different order from adultery, for although it is an encroachment upon
e husband's sexual prerogative over his wife, it takes place with his
ll agreement, and he himself obtains a reciprocal liberty. It appears
om Wikar's description that the relationship is formally agreed
on by the two husbands, for he speaks of it as being accompanied
slaughtering and rejoicing, but it is not clear if we have anything
re in the nature of the *sore* relationship.[1] In any case it is a good
ustration of the freedom of sexual life among the Hottentots.
similar instance is mentioned by Alexander: "If a Hottentot has
en out hunting and on his return finds his place occupied, he sits
wn at the door of his hut, and the paramour handing him out a bit
tobacco, the injured man contentedly smokes it till the latter chooses
retire."[2] This statement one would certainly question were it not
mpatible with the description just quoted from Wikar, who is on
e whole so accurate an observer that there is no good reason for
ecting his evidence on this particular point.

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The only ground for divorce is ill-treatment, which has to be
oved to the satisfaction of the tribal council, in whose hands the
cision lies. A wife deserting her husband is forced to return to
n, and similarly a husband abandoning his wife is requested to
urn to her. Should he refuse or neglect to do so, his property is
ken from him and handed over to her.[3]

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Marriage, in addition to establishing the household with all its
companying social, economic, and legal functions, also creates
ial observances of a special type with regard to the relatives-in-
. A man not only lives, as we have seen, with his parents-in-law
some time after his marriage, during which he has to render them

1 Op. cit., 103.
2 *Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa*, i, 196. Cf. also Thunberg, *Travels in ope, Africa, and Asia*, ii, 42, 64–5.
3 Kohler, op. cit., 343, 354.

marriage and what should be contributed to the reception: 584
or the young man chooses for himself and then the engagement does not consist in asking her and her saying "yes" but in an action. The young man bashfully points a little stick at the girl of his choice. When she takes the stick, breaks it in two and throws the part broken off at his breast, the question is settled and they understand each other.

No matter how the engagement came about—from the day of the betrothal "separation-period" sets in. The engaged couple dare not meet each other, under no circumstances speak to each other and have to avail themselves of certain other people who have to tell the one what the other has to say. Such a period may sometimes be of considerable duration.

2. The marriage ceremony is as a rule celebrated in the 585
house of the parents of the bride in the form of a sumptuous meal, which is paid for either by the parents of the bridegroom alone or contributed to by both pairs of parents.

When after the marriage the bride comes to the village where the bridegroom stays—which may be days or even weeks after the marriage took place—another feast is held.

Since the majority of the Nama have turned to Christianity 585
the old customs have more or less ceased to exist. Christian 178
customs have been amalgamated with ancient traditional forms, whereby now the Christian and then the old characters appear at the wedding ceremonies.

3. The position of the woman among the Nama is by no 562
means that of the devoted servant of the man. According 593
to old custom the hut belongs to her and she disposes of everything within it. When in need of something the man has to approach his wife entreatingly and not imperiously. But since the old-fashioned huts which were covered with [342
rushes by the women have more and more been displaced by 423]
the modern houses, which the man builds with material for which he has laboured, the woman is being pushed into the background. The abode now becomes the property of the man and there is danger that the consequence will be ill-treatment of the woman. Whether a marriage is permanent 586
or not depends entirely on the relatives for when there are 602
among them those who blow a fire from the sparks of a small difference of opinion, it is easily broken, and the woman returns to her relatives. When on the other hand all the relations are friendly and work against a separation, such 595
a marriage is as a rule permanent. Polygamy was not uncommon with them in olden days, but under the influence of Christianity such cases are exceptions.

4. As soon as symptoms of pregnancy become visible the 843
husband has to devote special attention to his wife. In the first place he is obliged to appease her wishes for special food in order not to endanger the new life. The older women interest themselves so much in the expectant mother that

9: Ten Rhyne D-5 (1673) 1933
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Their wives have one finger joint, beginning from the first of the little finger, cut off for every man they have [46]). Like the Mohammedans the Hottentots indulge in polygamy. The justice of the people is administered according to their natural impulses, not regulated by law. The only punishment is that for homicide. In this event all the relatives of the dead man pursue the slayer; they do not rest till they have exacted vengeance. When they find the guilty man, they club him to death, or transfix him with spears, and continue to inflict blows upon him when already dead. Other offences, whether adultery or theft, they punish only by the *lex talionis* [47]). Finally, they have this peculiar custom: if a young man among them falls ill, they slaughter a fat ox, which will shortly furnish a delicious feast; and round the neck of the invalid they hang the largest of the internal organs, together with the omentum, and leave them there till they fall off rotten, when they must be eaten by the old men [48]). In the matter of succession the law of inheritance prevails among them, especially among the Essequas.

CHAP. XXIII.

Marriage.

When they wish to embark on marriage they approach their parents, who then approach the chief, so that they may have full permission to marry a maiden. But they never do this unless they possess at least one draught-ox, for removing the hut with its furniture, one or two milch cows, and ten or twelve sheep to celebrate the betrothal or the bringing home of the bride, etc. But those who are richer practise polygamy in the manner of the Turks; and

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a sheep on the ground, and to cut from it from time to time, in the presence of the patient, a piece of meat, which is given to the healthy persons. This meat is placed on the fire for a short time and consumed half raw, while the patient is vigorously smeared all over with the warm fat, torn out of a living sheep. In addition, the entrails of the beast are hung round the patient's neck, the treatment they believe will effect a speedy cure" (*V.R. Soc.* 5, 89). This rite (of which Ten Rhyne's description is but fragmentary), was not restricted to young men, as his statement would seem to imply, but was performed on all very sick people. His remark about the old men having to eat the rotten entrails which fell away from the neck of the patient is a ridiculous fantasy.

9: Ten Rhyne D-5 (1673) 1933
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if the marriage does not turn out satisfactorily, they put the woman away and make a divorce. Marriages are solemnized in the following way: they kill an ox, two or three or sometimes more sheep, then they skin the carcases and having exposed them for a little to the air they cook them with the animal's own fat in the pots we have mentioned; the innards they roast beneath the ashes, and when the feast has been prepared they summon their kin and set these dainties before them, enjoying themselves in their own way [49]).

CHAP. XXIV.

The Education of the Children.

If a woman is in easy childbed they are sufficiently skilful in binding and severing nature's links; but when a difficult labour sets in, they invoke the aid of a plant of wonderful efficiency, which happily expels the foetus [50]). I could not succeed in purchasing this plant at any price either directly or through others. Their reply always was that they are forbidden by law to share it. Women who have had a child are not long in retirement [51]). They bring their children up without any regularity or niceness, as you would expect from savages. After keeping them two or three weeks in the huts, they then sling them on their backs without any swaddling bands whatever. At a little more than four months old they begin to smoke and at eight months to walk upright, at which time they are given a kaross, according to information given me by one who had resided five years in the place. When they are eight or nine they begin to handle arms, both the bow and spears. Their parents often place their food at a distance; at this they must keep on aiming till they hit it, being compelled meantime to go on fasting [52]).

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tale that "as soon as a male is born his mother partially castrates him, and gives him sea-water to drink, and tobacco to eat"! (*op. cit.*, 392).